

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 3-4 and 6-7 have been amended and claims 8-18 have been added as follows:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original): A file access apparatus for making access to an image file in which image data on a plurality of screens forming a moving image and index information used for managing said image data on the plurality of screens are contained, under control of a CPU executing a plurality of tasks in parallel based on a multi-task OS, wherein

said plurality of tasks include:

a first instruction issue task of issuing a first readout instruction for reading out said index information from said image file;

a second instruction issue task of issuing a second readout instruction for reading out the image data from said image file with reference to the index information read out in accordance with said first readout instruction; and

an access task of making access to said image file in accordance with each of the first readout instruction issued by said first instruction issue task and the second readout instruction issued by said second instruction issue task.

Claim 2 (original): A file access apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said access task includes an access suspension process for suspending the access in accordance with said first readout

instruction until after completion of the access in accordance with the issued second readout instruction, and said second instruction issue task includes an issue suspension process for suspending issue of said second readout instruction when the index information to be referred to is not yet read out.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A file access apparatus according to claim 1 [[or 2]], wherein said first instruction issue task allows an issue process of said first readout instruction to be started prior to issue of said second readout instruction by said second instruction issue task.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A file access apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein said first instruction issue task allows issue of said first readout instruction to be started when accepting a selection operation for selecting said image file, and said second instruction issue task allows issue of said second readout instruction to be started when accepting a start operation for starting readout of said image data.

Claim 5 (original): A file access apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said start operation is carried out after said selection operation.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A file access apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein said index information is prepared for each screen.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A file access apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, further comprising a display means for displaying an image based on the image data read out in accordance with said second readout instruction.

Claim 8 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said index information is prepared for each screen.

Claim 9 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said index information is prepared for each screen.

Claim 10 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said index information is prepared for each screen.

Claim 11 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said index information is prepared for each screen.

Claim 12 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a display means for displaying an image based on the image data read out in accordance with said second readout instruction.

Claim 13 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising a display means for displaying an image based on the image data read out in accordance with said second readout instruction.

Claim 14 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising a display means for displaying an image based on the image data read out in accordance with said second readout instruction.

Claim 15 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a display means for displaying an image based on the image data read out in accordance with said second readout instruction.

Claim 16 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said first instruction issue task allows an issue process of said first readout instruction to be started prior to issue of said second readout instruction by said second instruction issue task.

Claim 17 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said first instruction issue task allows issue of said first readout instruction to be started when accepting a selection operation for selecting said image file, and said second instruction issue task allows issue of said second readout instruction to be started when accepting a start operation for starting readout of said image data.

Claim 18 (new): A file access apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said first instruction issue task allows issue of said first readout instruction to be started when accepting a selection operation for selecting said image file, and said second instruction issue task allows issue of said second readout instruction to be started when accepting a start operation for starting readout of said image data.